

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 IGA-02 EB-08 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 DOTE-00 /069 W
-----292228Z 035881 /75-70

P R 291430Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY MASERU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6852
INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY MBABANE
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

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F PASS AA/AFR; MBABANE FOR OSARAC; NAIROBI FOR REDSO

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAID, ELTN, LT
SUBJECT: US ASSISTANCE - LESOTHO ROAD CONSTRUCTION

REF: A. MASERU 0166, B. MASERU 0137,

1. SINCE CREATION OF TRANSKEI OCTOBER 1976, LESOTHO RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA HAVE SUFFERED SERIOUS DETERIORATION. PREVIOUS PRACTICE OF "GOOD NEIGHBORLINESS" HAS BEEN REPLACED WITH POLICY OF CONSTRAINED ASSOCIATION ACCOMPANIED BY ACTS OF VINDICTIVENESS BY SAG AND ATTEMPTS BY GOL TO REDUCE LESOTHO'S NEARLY TOTAL ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE ON SOUTH AFRICA. LESOTHO'S MAIN GREVIANCE AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA OVER TRANSKEI QUESTION (APART FROM FACT TRANSKEI IS SPIN-OFF OF DETESTED APARTHEID POLICY) HAS BEEN THE "CLOSING OF THE BORDER POINTS" ALONG THE FRONTIER WITH THE TRANSKEI AND THE END OF FREE AND UNIMPEDED TRAVEL FROM THE SOUTHEASTERN PART OF THIS COUNTRY INTO THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA. THE TRADITIONAL DEPENDENCE ON ROAD CONNECTIONS THROUGH SOUTH AFRICA AS LINKS
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BETWEEN EASTERN AND WESTERN PARTS OF LESOTHO CAN BE RELIED UPON NO LONGER. INTERIOR ROADS, LONG NEGLECTED OR NON-EXISTENT, HAVE BECOME A FIRST PRIORITY NEED FOR LESOTHO IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN ITS INTEGRITY AND TO AVOID BEING COERCED INTO RECOGNITION OF TRANSKEI.

2. THE CONFRONTATION WITH ITS GIANT NEIGHBOR OVER THE TRANSKEI

QUESTION HAS PUSHED LESOTHO INTO A NEW PHASE OF DEVELOPMENT SURROUNDED BY AN URGENCY NOT FELT HERETOFORE. UNFORTUNATELY, THE URGENT ACCELERATION OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS HAS COME ABOUT WITHOUT PROVISIONS FOR THE TREMENDOUS RESOURCES REQUIRED. LATE LAST YEAR, THE GOL COMPLAINED TO THE UNITED NATIONS ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA'S ACTIONS. THE SECURITY COUNCIL IN A UNANIMOUS RESOLUTION OF DECEMBER 22, 1976 SUPPORTED BY THE UNITED STATES, CALLED UPON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO PROVIDE IMMEDIATE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO LESOTHO. AN EMERGENCY MISSION FROM THE UN WAS SENT TO LESOTHO IN FEBRUARY TO ASSESS THE COUNTRY'S URGENT NEEDS.

3. GOL HAS OUTLINED A PLAN FOR ACCELERATED ROAD DEVELOPMENT TO MINIMIZE DEPENDENCE ON LINES OF COMMUNICATION THROUGH THE RSA, PROVIDE DESPERATELY-NEEDED ACCESS ROADS TO RURAL (MOUNTAIN) AREAS, ENCOURAGE AGRICULTURAL AND PASTORAL DEVELOPMENT AND TO PERMIT A FRE AND MORE AMPLE FLOW OF GOODS AND SERVICES WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF LESOTHO. EARLY THIS YEAR, THE GOL INVITED UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVES TO LOOK AT THE ROAD BETWEEN MOHALES HOEK AND QUTHING IN THE WEST TO QACHA'S NEK IN THE SOUTHEAST WHERE THE LESOTHO BORDER IS CONTIGUOUS WITH THE TRANSKEI. THIS IS THE NO. 1 PRIORITY ROAD IN THE GOL EMERGENCY PROGRAM. IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT THE UN MISSION WILL RECOMMEND ROADS, INCLUDING SPECIFICALLY THIS ROAD, AS A PRIORITY REQUIREMENT FOR LESOTHO IN ORDER TO LESSEN DEPENDENCE ON SOUTH AFRICA.

4. REF A SUMMARIZES DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE RDO AND THE CENTRAL PLANNING OFFICE. FOLLOWING THESE DISCUSSIONS, AN AID TEAM WAS DISPATCHED TO LESOTHO ON 3/7/77 TO ASSESS LESOTHO'S ROADS REQUIRE- LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MENTS AND DEVELOP PROJECT DOCUMENTATION. THESE DOCUMENTATIONS ARE NOW COMPLETE AND HAVE BEEN MAILED TO AID/W.

5. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE GOL OFFICIALS, NAMELY THE PERM SEC AND THE MINISTER OF WORKS, WERE MOST IMPRESSED BY THE SPEED OF U.S. RESPONSE IN LESOTHO'S URGENT HOUR OF NEED AND REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED THEIR APPRECIATION FOR THE RAPID U.S. RESPONSE REPRESENTED BY OSARAC AND REDSO'S STAFF.

6. WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT U.S. GOVERNMENT CAPITALIZE ON THIS FAVORABLE ENVIRONMENT BY MOVING AHEAD RAPIDLY. AMOUNT OF PROPOSED AID PROJECT (ALL GRANT) \$20,140,000
FIRST YEAR OF FUNDING (SSA) FY 1978
BROAD OBJECTIVE: TO DEVELOP THE MOW'S CAPACITY TO BE INVOLVED EFFECTIVELY IN LESOTHO'S ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE AS A PART OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

7. MAJOR PROJECT ELEMENTS: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR CONSTRUCTION BY MOW FORCE ACCOUNT OF 260 KM OF ROAD BETWEEN MOHALES HOEK AND

MPITI, THUS PROVIDING BADLY-NEEDED ACCESS TO QACHA'S NEK.
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO INCREASE THE LEROTHOLI POLYTECHNIC'S
OUTPUT OF DIPLOMA-LEVEL TDCHNICIANS IN ENGINEERING. OVERSEAS
ENGINEERING TRAINING (B.SC.). EQUIPMENT FOR ABOVE ROAD
CONUTRUCTION. ONE MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP AND RELATED EQUIPMEFT AT
MOHALE'S HOEK. ADDITIONAL FACILITIES AND RELATED EQUIPMENT AT
L.P. LOCAL OPERATING COSTS FOR ABOVE ROAD CONSTRUCTION.
STOKES

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, CONSTRUCTION, HIGHWAYS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 29-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MASERU00393
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770107-1134
Format: TEL
From: MASERU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770312/aaaaajqp.tel
Line Count: 124
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3aa901b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 MASERU 166, 77 MASERU 137
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2966196
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: US ASSISTANCE - LESOTHO ROAD CONSTRUCTION
TAGS: EAID, ELTN, LT
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3aa901b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009